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General Assembly

Sixty-second session

Official Records

115th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 23 July 2008, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kerim ..... (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Soborun (Mauritius), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 45 (*continued*)

Sport for peace and development

(a) Sport for peace and development

Draft resolution (A/62/L.46)

The Acting President: Members will recall that the Assembly held the debate on agenda item 45 and its sub-items (a) and (b) at its 40th plenary meeting, on 31 October 2007.

I now give the floor to the representative of Chile to introduce draft resolution A/62/L.46.

Mr. Muñoz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Principality of Monaco, the Russian Federation, Switzerland and Chile — countries that have united their efforts to sponsor the draft resolution entitled "Sport as a means to promote education, health, development and peace", which we introduce today before this Assembly under agenda item 45 (a).

First, I would like to stress the strong commitment and resolve of the countries presenting the draft resolution to recognize sport as a constructive and effective vehicle for promoting peace and development and creating an environment of tolerance, dialogue and respect, which are essential in today's world.

The draft resolution welcomes the decision of the Secretary-General to renew the mandate of his Special Adviser on Sport for Development and Peace, a post recently assumed by Mr. Wilfried Lemke. The draft resolution also recognizes and stresses the particular consideration that the Secretary-General has assigned to the effective functioning of the Office of Sport for Development and Peace, for which a special voluntary Trust Fund has been established.

As the resolutions on this item have done in past years, the draft resolution requests information on the state of progress of policies and best practices on sport and physical education in the national, regional and global spheres.

Our draft enjoys the broad sponsorship of the membership. This morning, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Czech Republic, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, the Philippines, Portugal and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia signed up as additional sponsors, for which we thank them and are most grateful.

The draft resolution seeks not only to build resources and infrastructure for sport, but also something much more ambitious: the aspiration to create what we could call a global culture of sport and physical education. Such a culture should incorporate not only young people, adults and the elderly, but also athletes with disabilities, women and men, and people of developed and developing countries in order to improve and contribute to a healthier, less violent and more tolerant world.

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We believe that those efforts should be supported not only by Governments, but also by leading world personalities, civil society and non-governmental organizations in order to achieve, through the establishment of efficient and realistic public policies, the promotion of sport and physical education at all levels. Although the promotion of such activities is the sovereign responsibility of each State, we must not overlook the concerted multilateral efforts whereby we have confirmed the growing need to achieve consensus on joint initiatives and share useful experiences in that area.

We wish to highlight at least two important events scheduled for this year that are connected to our work. First, in a few days the XXIX Olympic Games 2008 will begin in Beijing, a monumental occasion that we are certain will be a significant milestone in Olympic history. Moreover, in November, my country will host the Fédération internationale de football association Under-20 Women's World Cup, an event that our authorities consider to be a potent incentive for our youth to engage in healthy sport activities, while advocating gender issues. Furthermore, it is the first time that a women's world football tournament will be played in South America. Both events represent, among many other things, solid contributions to the promotion of sport and physical education at the international level.

Notwithstanding the progress achieved, we must pursue even more resolutely our efforts to disseminate and promote sport activities. In that context, we deem it necessary to generate new initiatives and understanding for the establishment of strategic alliances that result in the design of policies and the sufficient and predictable mobilization of resources for sport, in which the United Nations, the private sector, civil society, foundations, non-governmental organizations and sport federations play a central role.

By adopting the draft resolution before us today, we believe that the General Assembly would be contributing constructively to the international community, and especially to those vulnerable sectors afflicted by social exclusion, disease and the violence imposed by poverty. If we add in some measure thereby to the fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals, we believe that our efforts will not have been in vain.

The Acting President: I should like to announce that, since the introduction of draft resolution A/62/L.46, Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Benin, Bolivia, Burundi, Cape Verde, Colombia, Croatia, Cuba, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Fiji, Guatemala, Guinea, Haiti, Indonesia, Iraq, Kenya, Maldives, Qatar, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Swaziland, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Ukraine and Viet Nam have become sponsors of the draft.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/62/L.46.

I call on the representative of Bolivia.

Mr. Siles Alvarado (Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Bolivia is proud to sponsor a draft resolution as important as that before us, which recommends the practice of sport to promote peace and good understanding among peoples.

We also take this opportunity to stress the importance of remembering the universality of sport. We should not seek to hinder the practice of sport under pretexts of a geographical or regional nature. Specifically, Bolivia notes the attempt by the Fédération internationale de football association to prohibit football matches from being played in high-altitude cities, which would undoubtedly run counter to the universal practice of sport.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take action on draft resolution A/62/L.46, entitled "Sport as a means to promote education, health, development and peace".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/62/L.46?

Draft resolution A/62/L.46 was adopted (resolution 62/271).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 45?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 7 (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

The Acting President: The General Assembly will turn to a letter from the Chargé d'affaires ad interim of the Permanent Mission of Hungary to the

President of the General Assembly contained in document A/62/905, under sub-item (b) of agenda item 113, concerning the election of 29 members of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme.

Members will recall that the General Assembly concluded consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 113 at its 52nd plenary meeting on 15 November 2007. In order to enable the General Assembly to consider document A/62/905, it will be necessary to reopen consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 113. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to reopen consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 113?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: May I further take it that the Assembly agrees to proceed immediately to the consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 113?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 113 (*continued*)

Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections

(b) Election of 29 members of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme

Letter from Hungary (A/62/905)

The Acting President: Members will recall that, at its 52nd plenary meeting on 15 November 2007, the General Assembly elected the 29 members of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme for a term of office beginning on 1 January 2008 and ending on 31 December 2011.

In that connection, I would like to draw the attention of members to document A/62/905 containing a letter dated 2 July 2008 from the Chargé d'affaires ad interim of the Permanent Mission of Hungary to the United Nations. In her letter, the Chargé d'affaires announces that Hungary would like to relinquish its seat on the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme as of 31 December 2008 for the remaining term, in favour of Serbia. As a result, a vacancy will occur and a new member must therefore be elected to fill the unexpired term of office of Hungary, commencing on 1 January 2009 and expiring on 31 December 2011.

In accordance with paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII), 15 December 1972, and taking into account that the vacancy will occur from among the Eastern European States, the new member should therefore be elected from that region. The President has been informed that the Group of Eastern European States has endorsed Serbia as a candidate for the vacancy.

As members are aware, in accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, all elections shall be held by secret ballot and there shall be no nominations.

However, I should like to recall paragraph 16 of General Assembly decision 34/401, whereby the practice of dispensing with the secret ballot for elections to subsidiary organs when the number of candidates corresponds to the number of seats to be filled should become standard, unless a delegation specifically requests a vote on a given election.

In the absence of such a request, may I take it that the Assembly decides to proceed to the election on that basis?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: May I therefore take it that the Assembly wishes to declare Serbia elected a member of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme for a term of office beginning on 1 January 2009 and expiring on 31 December 2011?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: I congratulate Serbia on its election as a member of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 113?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.